

Establishment of the Asia Oncology Nursing Society (AONS)

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ABSTRACT

Over the past several years, whenever an informal group of Asian oncology nurses gathered, they talked about their mutual desire to create an organization closer to their homes that would be similar to the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS). They saw this as a means for more of their colleagues to learn about the latest in cancer nursing and to have a time and place to network among themselves. This message continued to gain strength whenever these nurses met at other international meetings such as the International Conference on Cancer Nursing (ICCN), the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC) and the Oncology Nursing Society in US. A definite and planned step toward forming an Asian organization as the first meeting

was taken on June 24 2011 when several Asian nurses were attending a MASCC meeting in Greece. The second meeting was held in Prague, Czech Republic, in conjunction with the 17th ICCN meeting on September 10 2012, where the participants of the meeting included 21 oncology nurses from Asian countries. Finally, the first official meeting of the board directors from nine countries was held on November 21 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. Now, and in the future, sharing and collaborating in the practice, education and research for oncology nursing in Asia is needed.

Key words: Asia Oncology Nursing Society, Asian countries, establishment, oncology nurses

Introduction

Over the past several years, whenever an informal group of Asian oncology nurses gathered, they talked about their mutual desire to create an organization closer to their homes that would be similar to the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS). They saw this as a way for more of their colleagues to learn about the latest in cancer nursing and to have a time and place to network among themselves. This message continued to gain strength whenever these nurses met at other international meetings such as the International Conference on Cancer Nursing

(ICCN), the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC) and the Oncology Nursing Society in US (ONS).

Informal meetings to establish the Asia Oncology Nursing Society (AONS)

A definite and planned step toward forming an Asian organization as the first meeting was taken on June 24 2011 while several Asian nurses were attending a MASCC meeting in Greece. The group invited Dr. Judith Johnson (a past president of ONS) and Dr. Sultan Kav (recent president of EONS) to advise them on steps they needed to take for establishing the AONS. During this first meeting, a strategy was laid out for establishing the Asian Pacific Oncology Nursing Society (later shortened to AONS). Nine Asian countries along with Australia and New Zealand (located on the Pacific Rim) were identified as potential members. Dr. Kazuko Onishi from Japan, at the time a Board Director member of the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care (ISNCC)

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chaired the meeting. Included in the discussion were the purpose of the Asia Pacific Oncology Nursing Society, the membership, the organizational structure, the activities, the economic matter and details of establishing the first conference. Dr. Kazuko Onishi agreed to make a draft of bylaws with the assistance of Dr. Judi Johnson. The detailed minutes of that meeting will be found on the AONS web site under the history of the organization. A key outcome of this meeting was the identification of the intended purpose or aim of this organization. It was stated that an Asian nursing organization would contribute to the cancer control and nursing in Asia through the exchange of practice and the collaboration of research in cancer nursing, academic institutions, other organizations or bodies contributing to the development of cancer nursing throughout Asia.

The second meeting was held in Prague, Czech Republic, in conjunction with the 17th ICCN meeting on September 10 2012. Participants at that meeting were 21 oncology nurses from Indonesia, Hong Kong/China, Japan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand [Figure 1]. The group identified Pongpak Pittayapan from Thailand and Kazuko Onishi from Japan as co-founders of the organization. Dr. Yeur-Hur Lai from Taiwan agreed to serve as chair of the conference's Scientific Planning Committee. Dr. Pittayapa assumed the responsibility of hosting the first conference in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2013. The Korean nurses volunteered to coordinate the 2015 conference in their country. After that time, a process including a review of applications would be used for selecting a future site of the every 2-year conferences that would be held in alternate years from the ISNCC. Dr. Onishi assumed responsibility for contacting the nine countries that had formalized cancer-nursing organizations in their countries and were geographically located within



Figure 1: Participants of the 2nd Meeting at Prague in September 2012

Asia. This group would be invited to form the nucleus of the organization and commit to sending a representative from their organization to the first official meeting of the AONS Board of Directors on November 21 2013. All nine countries responded in the affirmative, and, over the months leading up to their face to face meeting, Dr. Onishi used emails to keep these leaders informed about the conference, the call for abstracts, review of a draft of the bylaws, etc.

Official meeting of the AONS board of directors

The inaugural meeting of the AONS Board of Directors was held in English on November 21 2013 at the Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand. The AONS board members were selected based on their ISNCC full membership. This included China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. All except Korea were present at this inaugural meeting. In addition to the eight representatives, Dr. Judi Johnson and Sultan Kav, who had served as consultants throughout the early stages of establishing the framework of the organization, were asked to help in conducting the meeting and document the actions taken at the meeting itself. Kazuko Onishi, as co-founder, facilitated the meeting and served to clarify the actions taken to date. All observers were welcomed but asked not to comment unless specifically asked for their input.

The agenda included approval of the draft of the bylaws, which was done after careful discussion, and some changes to various sections (see the AONS website for the approved bylaws). Size, years since being organized, staff and financial support varies greatly among the nine organizations. For example, the size of the membership of the societies varies from 250 to 20,000 oncology nurses. After a lengthy, discussion the following annual fee schedule was adopted [Table 1].

Following acceptance of the bylaws, selection of an executive board was next on the agenda. All board members were asked to provide names of nurses from their countries who could serve on this board for a 2-year term. The executive board is charged with meeting via conference call,

Table 1: Annual membership fee

Membership	Fee, annually
Individual membership	\$20 USD
Society membership	
Under 500 members	\$75 USD
501-2000 members	\$100 USD
Over 2000 members	\$150 USD
Associate organizational membership	\$2000 USD

email or at a face to face meeting whenever possible. The contents of their meetings will be available on the AONS web site, where it is available for all members to read. Any member is welcome to give feedback to the executive board via email. Drs Onishi, Johnson and Kav created a ballot using the names submitted by the board members.

A brief meeting was called the next day at which time a brief statement was given about each candidate followed by a vote using paper ballots. Results of the election were as follows:

President: Myung Sun Yi, RN, Ph.D (South Korea)
 President Elect: Pongpak Pitayapan, RN, Ph.D (Thailand)
 Secretary: Winnie So, RN, Ph.D (China) external activities
 Chen Young Yi, RN, Ph.D (China) internal activities
 Treasure: Kazuko Onishi, RN, Ph.D (Japan)

The results of this election were announced at the membership meeting, which was held as part of the “Meet and Greet Asian Nurse” session on November 23, 8:00-8:30 AM [Table 2 and Figure 2]. Additionally, Dr. Johnson presented to the board directors a flyer about the Asia Pacific Journal of Oncology Nursing and explained the journal’s interest in having AONS use this new journal as their official journal. The board members discussed the concept and asked for Dr. Johnson to have some points clarified. She will provide feedback to the Executive Board and they will address this request at their first executive board meeting.

Conclusion

The AONS was established on November 21 2013, after a founding movement of more than 2 years. They need now to collectively be energized to implement the aims of the AONS. All of them are challenged with a rapid rise in the elderly population across, resulting in an increase of



Figure 2: The 1st AONS Board Meeting, Participants (Not All) of the 1st Meeting

Table 2: Attendees at the 1st AONS Board Meeting

AONS Board Member	Name (Nationality)
AONS Board of Directors	
	Xu Bo (China)
	Sulochana Retnanomy (India)
	Kemala Rita (Indonesia)
	Hiroko Komatsu (Japan)
	Cecilia G. Pena (Philippines)
	Chua Gek Phin (Singapore)
	Li-Lu Chang (Taiwan)
	Pongpak Pittayapan (Thailand)
	YoungSook Tae (Korea)
Observers	
	Winnie So (Hong Kong/China)
	Yong-Yi Chen (China)
	Susanne Mak (Hong Kong/China)
	Shiow-Ching Shun (Taiwan)
	LeungWai Carenx (Hong Kong/China)
	Michiyo Mizuno (Japan)
	Kaori Yagasaki (Japan)
	Abdolah khorami markani (Iran)
Additional Invited Participants	
	Kazuko Onishi (Japan), AONS Co-Founder
	Judi Johnson (USA), AONS Advisor and Facilitator of Meeting
	Sultan Kav (Turkey), AONS Advisor Serve as Scribe
	Yeur-Hur Lai (Taiwan), AONS Scientific Committee Chair

cancer patients. As oncology nurses, they need to establish creative strategies for cancer prevention, address issues of long-term cancer survivorship, palliative care and end of life care, and to do all of this while respecting a person’s culture. Moreover, an oncology nursing needs to provide patient education that advocates for self-management through people’s life styles, such as eating habits, smoking and traditional therapy, all within Asian cultures. Also, they ought to be considering the role of mind and body regarding the harmony of mental, central nerve system, immune system and hormone as an important aspect of total care in oncology nursing. The AONS holds out an opportunity for them, as oncology nurses, to accomplish these concerns with one collective voice. Sharing and collaborating in their practice, education and research for oncology nursing in Asia is needed now and in the future.

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